

Review Articles

Cataloging Principles

Cataloguing Principles and Practice: An Inquiry. Lectures delivered at a Vacation Course of the University of London School of Librarianship and Archives in March, 1953. Edited, with an introduction, by Mary Piggott. London: The Library Association, 1954. viii, 159 p. 14s.

This inquiry into cataloging principles and practice is a partial expression of a widespread reawakening of interest in the problem of cataloging in general and of its governing rules in particular. In Germany the revision of the Prussian rules is being lively debated and consideration is given to such far-reaching proposals as the adoption of the principle of corporate authorship and the entry of titles under the first word instead of under the "governing noun"—proposals calculated to remove the most important differences between the Prussian and the Anglo-American codes and some of the greatest obstacles to an international entente in cataloging. In France the construction of a new code is well under way, and in Italy a new revision of the 1922 rules has gone to the printer and public libraries will be required by ministerial decree to follow the new rules. An account of developments in revision of the cataloging codes in various countries is being compiled by UNESCO and may be in print in the *UNESCO Bulletin for Libraries* when this is read. But this British inquiry is of particular interest to American librarians, and especially catalogers, in view of our own present concern with the ALA cataloging rules and the hope shared by both American and British librarians that the forthcoming revision will produce once more an Anglo-American code.

The work is broad in scope and compact in contents, and includes the following chapters:

- I. "Introduction: A Survey of the Present Situation," by Mary Piggott, Lecturer, School of Librarianship and Archives, University of London.
- II. "Current Research in Cataloguing," by Henry A. Sharp, Secretary, Library Association Sub-committee on Cataloguing Rules.
- III. "A Reconsideration of the British Museum Rules for Compiling the

Catalogues of Printed Books—I," by F. C. Francis, Keeper, Department of Printed Books, British Museum.

- IV. "———II," by A. H. Chaplin, Deputy Keeper, Department of Printed Books, British Museum.
 - V. "New Developments in Cataloguing in the *British National Bibliography*," by A. J. Wells, Editor, the *British National Bibliography*.
 - VI. "Regional Union Catalogues," by R. F. Vollans, Deputy City Librarian, Westminster.
 - VII. "Subject Union Catalogues," by D. T. Richnell, Deputy Librarian, University of London Library.
 - VIII. "Punched Card Systems for Cataloguing and Indexing," by D. V. Arnold, Librarian, Paints Division, Imperial Chemical Industries Ltd., Slough.
 - IX. "Cataloguing in Municipal Libraries," by S. J. Butcher, Librarian, Hampstead Public Libraries.
 - X. "Cataloguing in County Libraries," by Lorna Paulin, County Librarian, Hertfordshire.
 - XI. "Cataloguing in University Libraries," by R. S. Mortimer, Sub-Librarian, Brotherton Library, University of Leeds.
 - XII. "Cataloguing in Special Libraries," by L. J. Jolley, Librarian, Royal College of Physicians, Edinburgh.
- Appendix: "The Questionnaire and the Answers."

Each of these chapters has an interest of its own, but all of them deal with cataloging principles and practice. No attempt will be made here to summarize these chapters, but to discuss briefly the two focal points of the inquiry—the cataloging situation which British librarians face and the cataloging code which they envisage.

The Situation.—The picture of the situation is based largely on the returns of a questionnaire which was sent to some 150 libraries, of which 70 replied. These included 16 college and university libraries, 24 municipal and seven county public libraries, 27 special libraries (five of these departments of public libraries functioning as special libraries), and the British Museum, a group which Miss Piggott regards as "sufficient to give a fair picture of the situation in the more progressive libraries."

It is apparent from the returns that the card catalog is by far the type favored most by all libraries. Nevertheless, the acclaim is not unanimous. Miss Piggott quotes the nostalgic sentiment expressed by the editor of the *Manchester Guardian* who spoke at a celebration of the Manchester Public Library of "the great printed reference library catalogue, so much easier to find one's way about in, than these dirty cards that stick together and are arranged on some queer Yankee philosophical system to provide the maximum mystification," and who thought that the only good thing that could be said about the card catalog is that "to get to the bottom tiers you have to bend the knees and adopt a crouching position which I believe is good for the figure." The sheaf catalog (a form of loose slips held together in a special binder) is a distant second in popularity, but is not obsolete. It is found sometimes side by side with a card catalog, in university, public, and special libraries, and even some of the regional union catalogs are reported to be in sheaf form. Those who have sheaf catalogs seem to be contented to continue them, and such a progressive thinker as Mr. Jolley suggests that, for special libraries, "The sheaf catalogue has also great advantages when used for either an author or subject catalogue." But Mr. Butcher feels that "the future solution does not lie in either the sheaf or card form. Recently there has been some revaluation of the merits of the printed catalogue and, with the development of photographic processes, there is a distinct possibility of the return of this form of catalogue." And there are also some "guard book" catalogs. It would seem, however, that the perspective of the discussion on this point has been unduly limited by existing cataloging conditions. For if the British libraries are to adopt eventually one cataloging code and are to enjoy the benefits of centralized and cooperative cataloging, which they feel is an imperative need, then the printed card will undoubtedly be recognized as a most effective instrument providing for a maximum of cooperative benefits and the card catalog will naturally result as a product of the plan.

The author catalog is generally regarded as the basic record, and Mr. Mortimer advises: "If the library's resources admit of only one catalogue being provided, then the author or name catalogue is undoubtedly the first need."

It is reportedly used with success by the readers, although one innocent reader thought that *8vo* meant eight volumes and another thought that the reference "*see London Library of Political and Economic Science*" meant that he was to go to that library for the book he wanted. Four university libraries have only author catalogs, but the other libraries have also a subject record of all or part of their collections. The classified catalog predominates in the university and special libraries and, somewhat surprisingly, also in the county libraries, but not in the municipal libraries; the indications are, however, that readers find the classified catalog more difficult to use than alphabetical subject headings. Where the latter are used, university and special libraries favor a separate alphabetical subject catalog while municipal libraries distinctly prefer the dictionary catalog; but some readers felt that separating the subject entries from the dictionary catalog would facilitate the use of the catalog. In this connection it is of interest to note that the monolithic structure of the union catalog is also not to be considered as beyond question. Describing the Berghoeffer system used with some modifications and a good deal of success by the Swiss union catalog Mr. Vollans says:

The Berghoeffer system, first used in the Frankfurt union catalogue, divides the catalogue into three groups: author entries, title entries (anonymous), geographical entries (geographical catchwords in titles, names of societies, etc.). The author catalog is arranged by surname and title of entry, disregarding initials, given names, designations, etc. Experience has shown that the Berghoeffer system has great advantages: titles are found more quickly and more surely, and the need to correct or complete initials or first names is eliminated.

One wonders whether this system has been sufficiently considered in this country. The arrangement of entries by surname only and title will undoubtedly, in addition to a material saving in the editorial cost of the union catalog, greatly facilitate the location of *a given edition of a given work when it is accurately cited*; but this arrangement will also make very difficult or impossible the location of a work inaccurately cited, or when some other edition or translation of the work is wanted in the absence of the edition cited, or when the available works of an author or

the available editions of a work are wanted. There is, however, little that can be said against the suggested division of the union catalog in several parts to facilitate its maintenance and use.

The Anglo-American code of 1908 is used largely in the municipal and county libraries, the ALA rules of 1949 lead in the university libraries and to a lesser extent in the special libraries, and some libraries follow the British Museum rules. But all these codes are generally followed with various local adaptations, and Miss Piggott notes that "only one library was following the code it preferred without modification." And at least one library was using its own code. It is this diversity of cataloging practices which presents British librarians with their most crucial cataloging problem. For it is generally realized that, as Mr. Butcher concludes, "the construction of a full and adequate catalogue is beyond the range of many individual libraries. It is a task that could be done better and more economically by a central organization." But this obviously requires the general adoption of one cataloging code. This point was emphatically brought home to British libraries in recent years when they found that their cataloging idiosyncrasies prevented them from taking full advantage of the cataloging service rendered by the *British National Bibliography*, whose entries had to be variously adapted before they could be integrated with the other entries in the catalogs. This situation, added to a growing and critical dissatisfaction with the cataloging rules in effect, gave rise to a quest for a new code of cataloging rules which would be adopted and followed by British libraries and which would meet the demands of modern conditions and critical thought.

The Quest.—The quest of a new code of cataloging rules has occupied in recent years the British Library Association Sub-committee on Cataloguing Rules, the administration and the catalogers of the British Museum library, the *British National Bibliography*, and, of course, individual librarians. All these are represented in the inquiry. What type of a code is envisaged?

In the first place, it is obvious that the British want their new code to be strictly functional. They want first to define as closely as possible the functions which the catalog should serve and then develop a code which will serve best these functions. In his

discussion of the British Museum rules Mr. Chaplin says:

In discussions on the efficiency of these rules it has become clear that the criteria to be applied cannot be expressed purely in such general terms as simplicity, consistency, clarity, precision and economy (though all these qualities are important); they must be directly related to the particular functions of our own catalogue.

Mr. Wells begins his discussion of developments in cataloging in the *British National Bibliography* with a consideration of the functions of the catalog. Mr. Butcher assumes that "fundamental to any examination of the way in which cataloguers are doing the job is an analysis of functions of the various types [of catalogues] provided." But most emphatic on this point is Mr. Jolley who says:

We have all used the catalogue of a great library as a substitute for an encyclopaedia, but is this a legitimate use? We must define the function of our catalogue and rigidly exclude all that does not help towards the discharge of that function.

The functions themselves are not fully crystallized and are variously defined, and there may be some disagreement on emphasis and extent, but they all seem to center around the idea that the functions of the catalog are (1) to facilitate the location of a given work in the library, and (2) to relate and bring together in the catalog the works of an author and the editions of a work—with emphasis on the former where the two functions are in conflict and are to be reconciled. In Mr. Chaplin's words the functions "are basically two: (1) the rapid location in the library of any particular known book, and (2) the provision of lists of books in the library belonging to certain classes—these classes being mainly, because of the structure of the [British Museum] catalogue, those of books by or about particular individuals"; but later on he explains that "the catalogue's second function requires that not only all editions of this particular work, but all works by this author, should be found in the same place in the catalogue." Mr. Wells expresses these functions in different terms: "The primary purpose of a catalogue is to lead [directly] to information on the specific item of search. Thus, if I search for details of the book called *Old Wives' Tale*, by Arnold Bennett,

I shall expect to find them directly by searching under Bennett, Arnold," not indirectly, via a cross reference, under the full name Bennett, Enoch Arnold. The second principle is not stated as such, but its recognition is reflected in some of the rules providing for the entry of the works of an author who used several names or several forms of name under one form of name. And Mr. Jolley states categorically: "It is the function of the catalogue to enable the reader who has certain information about a book to find the book. It is not the function of the catalogue to apportion the responsibility for the creation of the book or to give a full bibliographical description of it." Thus, if an author uses initials only, he should be entered under the initials and not under the full name. "Initials have an untidy and unfinished appearance, but if initials enable the reader to find an author, there is no justification for searching for the full name." Mr. Jolley prefers to describe his approach as "finding-list cataloguing." But it seems that he, too, is not unconcerned about the second function, for he goes on to say: "Of course, an author may change the form of his name in titles and this illustrates the need for extra vigilance on the part of the 'finding-list' cataloguer."

As for the character of the code as a whole, Mr. Sharpe, after discussing briefly a critique by this reviewer of the ALA rules, says:

One could go on for a long time enumerating the changed views that are reflected in Mr. Lubetzky's report, and which are held by our own Cataloguing Rules Sub-committee. If the next revision of the code adopts these changed views it is apparent that we are going to see a very different set of rules from any that has gone before.

And towards the end of his lecture he characterizes that revision as "The quest for a revised author and title code on as simple lines as possible, concentrating on an endeavor to formulate fewer rules but more general principles; a code certainly acceptable to the United States and ourselves, and as far as possible in the international field." Mr. Chaplin, in his most interesting discussion of the British Museum rules, indicates some of the principles now favored by the British Museum catalogers after extended discussion of the issues involved, although the revision of

the British Museum catalog, in accordance with these principles, would present a formidable task. These principles include: the entry of a work whose author is known under the name of the author whether or not that name appears in the work—in lieu of the present BM rule which prescribes that the entry must be based on the information found in the book itself; the entry of anonymous works under their titles—in lieu of the present BM rules prescribing their entry under the names of people, places, or other proper names mentioned in the titles, or under various form and class headings such as Catalogues, Directories, Liturgies, and Hymnals; the entry of all the works of an author under his real name or his pseudonym if the latter "is much better known or much more often used"—in lieu of the present rules under which the works of an author or the editions of a work may be entered partly under the author's real name and partly under his pseudonym if the works have so been issued. On the question of entry of corporate bodies, Mr. Chaplin says that "opinions range from those who would put every individual organization under its own name, if it has one, to those who would retain the present position [*i.e.* entry under place] intact." He adds, however, that "While the debate continues, it may be of interest to note that neither side shows much sympathy for the distinction observed in the ALA Code between Societies and Institutions, and neither is convinced of the usefulness of separating into two lists, official and unofficial institutions entered under the same place." Although the question is still undecided, the arguments cited are clearly on the side of entry of corporate bodies under their names, and it is noted that the principle "to which present practice increasingly tends to conform" is that "geographical heading should be used only for government departments and the like, and for local institutions whose names are quite undistinctive." While these principles do not cover the whole field of the problem and are so far only the result of "exploratory" discussions, they reflect an important and growing rapprochement in Anglo-American thought, and progress toward an eventual international agreement, on bibliographical and cataloging principles.—*Seymour Lubetzky, Library of Congress.*